



Montana Association of Counties

SENATE Public Health

Exhibit No. 2
Date 4-12-2013

2715 SKYWAY DRIVE, SUITE A, HELENA, MT 59602

(406) 449-4360 Fax (406) 442-5238

Bill No. HB 623
www.mtcounties.org

April 8, 2013

Honorable Members of the 63rd Montana Legislature:

The Montana Association of Counties (MACo) supports the provision of affordable health insurance and/or medical care for uninsured and underinsured residents of the State of Montana. The costs of providing medical and mental health care to individuals who now have no health insurance is more expensive, as they are typically only provided treatment when a condition has become an emergency situation. Montana counties spend over \$40 million per year on charity care, bad debt, public health, and inmate medical costs.

As with any illness, early intervention and treatment such as wellness screenings and preventive care, as well as ongoing care and maintenance of health conditions significantly reduce the costs of providing health care.

County budgets are significantly impacted as a result of these individuals not having health benefits in the following areas:

- 1) County owned Hospitals and locally operated Hospital Districts are located in 13 Montana counties. Charity care and bad debt become the direct responsibility of local governments with these facilities. In 2011, these 13 smaller local health care facilities were responsible for a conservatively estimated subsidy of \$1,579, 206 in charity care.
- 2) In 2011, these same facilities had \$3.9 M in bad debt. Much of this is considered to have been accrued by low income patients; however, since these patients did not apply for charity care, the bad debt component is more difficult to measure.
- 3) Counties budgeted \$17,398,538.82 for charity care and public health costs in fiscal year 2012 to provide services to the public in their communities. The individuals using these services do not have health coverage or access to care, so the costs are being borne by the counties.
- 4) Once an individual is incarcerated, the costs of medical care are borne by the county of arrest. Pre-adjudication inmate medical costs for individuals in county detention facilities are substantial, as our county detention facilities have become the "emergency room" for those who are incarcerated and have significant health issues which have gone either undiagnosed or untreated due to the lack of health care coverage and/or inability to pay the costs of medical care. In fiscal year 2012, counties in Montana expended \$4,264,100 on inmate medical costs.
- 5) Counties spend millions each year on emergency detention and involuntary commitments of the mentally ill. These costs include the costs of detention, petitions, transports, evaluations and treatments. The Montana Legislature has studied this issue for many years, and in 2009 recognized the need for more community based services by appropriating \$1.3 million for community based services.

MACo

With this appropriation, counties such as Gallatin and Ravalli were able to build and staff new facilities and expand community based mental health services. However, our rural counties are still without local crisis centers and the professional staff necessary to provide critical mental health services to residents, including Montana's Veterans and Native Americans.

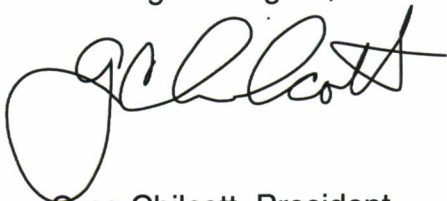
The influx of workers in the Bakken oil fields is significantly straining our rural counties resources and budgets, with the affects being felt far west of the oil fields. In Musselshell County, the daily average jail population has increased from an average of three (3) inmates per day, to over 30. As there are very limited community based facilities in the eastern rural counties that can provide emergency detention or the necessary evaluation and treatment of those in crises, our county sheriffs must transport these individuals to the state hospital in Warm Springs.

The results of the 2007 HJ50 study of precommitment costs by the Law & Justice Interim Committee reported the cost of transport from Roosevelt County to Warm Springs was \$1,350 plus 32 man hours.

By providing some form of affordable health insurance and/or medical coverage for the uninsured and underinsured, Montana counties could recognize significant savings in their budgets; which would offer counties the opportunity to reinvest in their communities. This could be accomplished by providing the necessary professionals and facilities to provide sustainable and quality mental health and health care services to county residents through enhanced community based services.

In closing, we urge you to support the provision of health insurance and/or medical care coverage for uninsured and underinsured residents of the State of Montana, as it will provide a significant cost savings to counties.

With highest regard,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Chilcott", with a large, stylized initial "G" that loops around the first part of the name.

Greg Chilcott, President
Montana Association of Counties

Attachment:

March 2013 MACo Survey of Montana Counties re:
Charity care, public health and inmate medical

**MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
CHARITY CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND INMATE MEDICAL COSTS
MARCH 2013 COUNTY SURVEY**

COUNTY	Does your county budget any charity care for residents.	If yes, what is your county's budget for charity care?	Does your county budget for public health for items such as public health departments and public health nurses that provide direct services for your citizens? Do not include costs for sanitarian, public health board, etc. Just for direct benefits to citizens.	What did your county spend on inmate medical costs for Fiscal Year 2012?	TOTALS
Anaconda-DL	No	N/A	N/A	13,089.92	13,089.92
Beaverhead	No	N/A	307,693.00	1,622.00	309,315.00
Big Horn	Yes	150.00	81,480.00	79,746.00	161,376.00
Blaine	No	N/A	78,000.00	7,222.28	85,222.28
Broadwater	No	N/A	67,640.00	18,371.00	86,011.00
Butte - SB	Yes	226,500.00	490,277.00	223,259.00	940,036.00
Carbon	No	N/A	46,850.00	9,507.65	56,357.65
Carter	No	N/A	25,000.00	0.00	25,000.00
Cascade	No	N/A	850,849.00	169,174.00	1,020,023.00
Chouteau	No	N/A	114,061.00	3,352.86	117,413.86
Custer	No	N/A	214,758.00	7,637.59	222,395.59
Daniels	No	N/A	4,569.00	0.00	4,569.00
Dawson	Yes	8,250.00	330,000.00	59,325.00	397,575.00
Fallon	Yes	500.00	305,453.00	165.00	306,118.00
Fergus	No	N/A	673,037.00	20,818.61	693,855.61
Flathead	Yes	21,785.00	1,678,153.00	157,258.49	1,857,196.49
Gallatin	No	N/A	534,805.00	551,793.87	1,086,598.87
Garfield	Yes	3,000.00	57,400.00	0.00	60,400.00
Glacier	No	N/A	58,588.00	6,833.83	65,421.83
Golden Valley	Yes	2,300.00	N/A	252.63	2,552.63
Granite	Yes	10,000.00	53,050.00	4,395.00	67,445.00
Hill	No	N/A	159,725.00	51,060.50	210,785.50
Jefferson	No	N/A	561,321.82	16,500.00	577,821.82
Judith Basin	Yes	995.00	2,000.00	2,965.40	5,960.40
Lake	No	N/A	167,825.00	252,093.00	419,918.00
Lewis & Clark	Yes	386,540.00	352,321.00	351,215.00	1,090,076.00

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Liberty	No	N/A	12,750.00	1,000.00	13,750.00
Lincoln	No	N/A	422,843.00	81,553.00	504,396.00
Madison	Yes	19,789.00	357,617.00	15,410.60	392,816.60
McCone	No	N/A	133,714.00	46,781.00	180,495.00
Meagher	No	N/A	329,686.00	50.00	329,736.00
Mineral	No	N/A	124,505.00	4,406.10	128,911.10
Missoula	Yes	237,000.00	1,100,000.00	496,200.00	1,833,200.00
Musselshell	No	N/A	No	8,096.50	8,096.50
Park	Yes	15,000.00	204,727.00	34,355.00	254,082.00
Petroleum	No	N/A	4,625.00	1,730.00	6,355.00
Phillips	Yes	6,000.00	189,653.00	33.00	195,686.00
Pondera	Yes	812.00	104,815.00	4,539.74	110,166.74
Powder River	No	N/A	60,000.00	417.00	60,417.00
Powell	Yes	150,768.00	40,700.00	19,170.47	210,638.47
Prairie	No	N/A	73,673.00	330.60	74,003.60
Ravalli	No	N/A	154,700.00	263,111.00	417,811.00
Richland	No	N/A	141,000.00	2,208.52	143,208.52
Roosevelt	No	N/A	318,800.00	16,588.00	335,388.00
Rosebud	Yes	40,400.00	472,133.00	95,978.00	608,511.00
Sanders	Yes	83,413.00	82,812.00	10,713.00	176,938.00
Sheridan	No	N/A	123,217.00	9,997.53	133,214.53
Stillwater	No	1,000.00	N/A	5,708.00	6,708.00
Sweet Grass	No	N/A	18,650.00	1,800.00	20,450.00
Teton	Yes	4,237.00	167,041.00	14,551.84	171,278.00
Toole	Yes	5,000.00	61,200.00	15,838.00	82,038.00
Treasure	Yes	1,250.00	16,466.00	0.00	17,716.00
Valley	Yes	6,000.00	570,000.00	80,000.00	656,000.00
Wheatland	No	N/A	72,947.00	5,923.56	78,870.56
Wibaux	No	N/A	107,000.00	0.00	107,000.00
Yellowstone	Yes	347,500.00	3,017,470.00	1,030,163.00	4,395,133.00
TOTALS		1,578,189.00	15,697,599.82	4,246,670.33	21,522,459.15